

STATE OF TENNESSEE**DON SUNDQUIST**
GOVERNOR

September 19, 2001

SEP 24 2001

Mr. Lake H. Barrett, Acting Director
U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Civilian Radioactive Waste Management
1000 Independence Ave. SW
Washington DC 20585

Dear Mr. Barrett:

I am writing on behalf of the State of Tennessee concerning the Yucca Mountain preliminary site suitability evaluation. We are presenting these comments for consideration by the Secretary of Energy as he develops his recommendation to the President regarding the development of the Yucca Mountain site in Nevada as a spent nuclear fuel and high-level nuclear waste geologic repository. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this nationally significant issue.

Tennessee will not oppose any recommendation made by the Secretary regarding the suitability of the Yucca Mountain site as an acceptable geologic repository for spent nuclear fuel. Our position on this issue is based upon the 20 years of technical investigation and study by the Department of Energy.

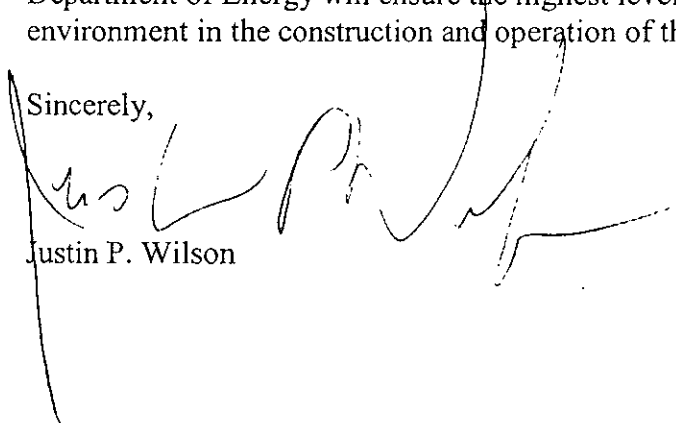
As home to one of the largest and oldest DOE sites in the nation, Tennessee anxiously awaits development of a safe national repository for spent nuclear fuel. Fuel from abandoned research reactors, commercial fuel returned to DOE for interim storage, and spent fuel from current operation of the high flux isotope reactor require constant management at Oak Ridge. The development of a secure national repository for these materials is in the best interest of Tennessee citizens and those of other DOE host states.

A positive recommendation by the Secretary to use the Yucca Mountain site for these purposes could also reduce concerns that the National Transuranic Repository (WIPP) in New Mexico might become the repository of spent nuclear fuel. Settling this question would allow WIPP to focus on resolving permitting issues related to receipt of Remote Handled Transuranic Waste (RH-TRU).

The largest legacy inventory of RH-TRU in the DOE complex is stored in tanks and drums at Oak Ridge. Potentially even larger amounts are in burial grounds and in the soil beneath tanks awaiting excavation. Demands for RH-TRU storage at Oak Ridge will continue to grow as more small quantity generators, such as the Battelle Columbus Laboratory in Ohio and Energy Technology Engineering Center in California, seek interim storage at sites like Oak Ridge as they await acceptance of RH-TRU at WIPP.

We believe the key to continuing progress at DOE sites across the nation is the development of a safe, state of the art, repository for spent nuclear fuel. We trust that the Department of Energy will ensure the highest level of protection of public health and environment in the construction and operation of that site.

Sincerely,



Justin P. Wilson

Xc: Leah Dever, DOE
Dick Green, EPA
Rodney Nelson, DOE
Carol Hanlon, DOE